

No sign of widespread lead exposure from Maui wildfires, Hawaii health officials say

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Photos of victims are displayed under white crosses at a memorial for the August 2023 wildfire victims, above the Lahaina Bypass highway, Dec. 6, 2023, in Lahaina, Hawaii. Hawaii health officials say test results show no evidence of widespread lead exposure from last summer's Maui wildfires. Blood samples were taken from more than 500 people to screen for lead after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century fire ripped through the town of Lahaina, killing 101 people. Credit: AP Photo/Lindsey Wasson, File

Lead screening conducted on west Maui residents after last summer's devastating wildfires showed no widespread exposure to the toxic metal, Hawaii health officials said Thursday.

Blood samples were taken from 557 people after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century ripped through the town of Lahaina, killing 101 people.

Just 27 people's [screening results came out positive](#), and subsequent testing showed 15 of them did not have elevated blood lead levels and were determined to have had a false positive, the state health department said.

"While the effects of the August 8 [wildfires](#) on the community have been devastating, it's reassuring to know that people in the community are not showing elevated [blood lead levels](#)," state Health Director Dr. Kenneth Fink said in a statement. "On the basis of these results with lead as an indicator of exposure, we do not expect to find health impacts caused by toxins in the wildfire ash."

Lead is one of the heavy metals of concern found in significant concentrations in [ash from the fires](#), the health department said.



A general view shows the aftermath of a devastating wildfire in Lahaina, Hawaii, Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2023. Hawaii health officials say test results show no evidence of widespread lead exposure from last summer's Maui wildfires. Blood samples were taken from more than 500 people to screen for lead after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century fire ripped through the town of Lahaina, killing 101 people. Credit: AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File

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